Henkin’s take on the emergence of the personal letter is very in depth. He talks about many different people and different parts in time where this was important and how it evolved from letters being only for “business”, but also for “personal” reasons. On page 94, Henkin’s mentions Benjamin Wingate and how he taught his son that letters are more than only for business or for the wealthy. Letters are a way to stay in touch with family, those far and near. He tells his son that you shouldn’t only write when you have “news” to tell, but to keep up and have a good rapport. Wingate says to write to them as if you are talking to them, as if they are face to face.

Another instance of learning to writing letters and their uses was on page 106. Theodore Tilton had a different idea of what to do with the letters instead of burning or tearing them up. Burning letters and destroying them to protect one’s self from personal information ending up in the wrong hands was a common practice that is explained later. Tilton wanted to save the letter’s he and his wife had written as a way to show their grandchildren how much they loved each other. This could be a learning experience for the grandchildren to also see how letters were constructed and written in the event that over time the practice had evolved.

On page 116, Henkin brought up the use of “Composition books”. These were instrumental in helping students learn. Henkin even mentions how composition books were probably “more influential” than letter-writing guides. He goes on to say that these may have contributed to the “popularization of stock expressions and formulaic gestures”. This was
another way students and people learned the proper ways to write letters and help grow their knowledge of the subject.

The way I determine whether I post of personal or public information and how it is viewed is pretty easy. First, all of my posts on Facebook are all private unless you are my “friend”. Not “friends of one of my friends”, I know that’s how many people have it set, but that opens up to so many people I don’t know or that do not know my information. The way I base it is the same in my military job. I have a security clearance, and do you know how much of the classified information I can share when outside of the work area? Zero. So, if the information I post on Facebook would cause stress and or negatively impact my life or someone else’s, I simply do not post it. I also have my settings that if I comment on a post that it does not show up for anyone else unless we are “friends”. Having these simple rules set and being aware of what I am posting will lead to less of a headache later.

Communicating with others will is something that you will need to do for the rest of your life. There are different instances such as personal, work related, someone you are attracted to. Each person you interact with will require different tones and rules of communicating. I have lots of experiences in my military career for communicating with many different people. I have had subordinates, superiors, commanders, mentors, work associates, friends. I would never email my commander and start it off with “Hey buddy, did you catch the game last week”. The general way I would email my commander/superior is something along the lines of “Sir/ma’am, I hope you are doing well.” I think proper communication is essential to establish and maintain boundaries and for general respect.
Another unspoken norm is the medium you would communicate with some people. I hardly ever email my friends, but I call and text them quite often. Such is the opposite with my boss from work; I call and email and always address that person by their title or another title of respect. This is lost in people who have never had to communicate with anyone besides their parents or siblings. If you do not know how to communicate with people using respect and in the proper medium, you will find they may not find this to be sufficient.